

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times _____
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____
REUTERS
Date **9 FEB 1989**

RYUDIP
140
-USA-WEBSTER

Thu Feb 09 14:42:56 1989

STAT

U.S. ADMINISTRATION WOULD LIKE TO HELP MEXICO, SAYS CIA CHIEF
LOS ANGELES, Feb 9, Reuter - The Bush administration would like to help Mexico through its debt problems so Mexico can become an anchor in a sound Latin American policy, CIA Director William Webster said in a report published on Thursday.

"But it's (Mexico) like every other place down there, it is fragile," Webster said in an interview with the Los Angeles Times in Washington.

Bush can be expected to give high priority to Latin America because he has to do that, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency said, predicting Mexico will be given far more attention that it has been in the past,

On Panama, Webster described the "survival capacities" of strongman Manuel Noriega as good. He said despite U.S. economic and political pressures to force Noriega out of power, Noriega is in no imminent danvillages just north of Kabul in preparation for an an offensive.

At least five villages close to a 70-km (45-mile) stretch of the Salang highway as far as Bagram have been ordered cleared, he told a news conference.

"The purpose was for the safety of the people and not to harm them," he said, speaking though an interpreter.

The area had been infiltrated by "highway robbers and plunderers," Delawar said, in a reference to the rebels.

The villages -- Mirbachakot, Shakadara, Karabagh, Kalakan, and Bagram -- had not been cleared yet but the order had been issued, Delawar said.

Heavy shelling or bombing has been audible from the area several times since the main body of Soviet troops passed up the Salang highway on their way home last week.

Afghan and Soviet forces conducted a heavy offensive against the guerrillas further up the 3,600-metre (12,000-foot) high Salang pass some three weeks ago.

Only a few hundred Soviet pilots and soldiers are left in Kabul, guarding the airport, and they are due to leave by air before the February 15 withdrawal deadline.

REUTER PFS
NNNN